

IDW

STAR TREK

#1

HARLAN ELLISON'S

THE CITY on the EDGE of FOREVER

THE ORIGINAL TELEPLAY



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ORIGINAL TELEPLAY BY
HARLAN ELLISON®

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SHIP'S LOG: STAR-DATE 3134.6. OUR CHRONOMETERS STILL RUN BACKWARD. WE HAVE FOLLOWED THE RADIATION TO ITS PLANET-SOURCE HERE AT THE RIM OF THE GALAXY, BUT SOMETHING ELSE IS HAPPENING...

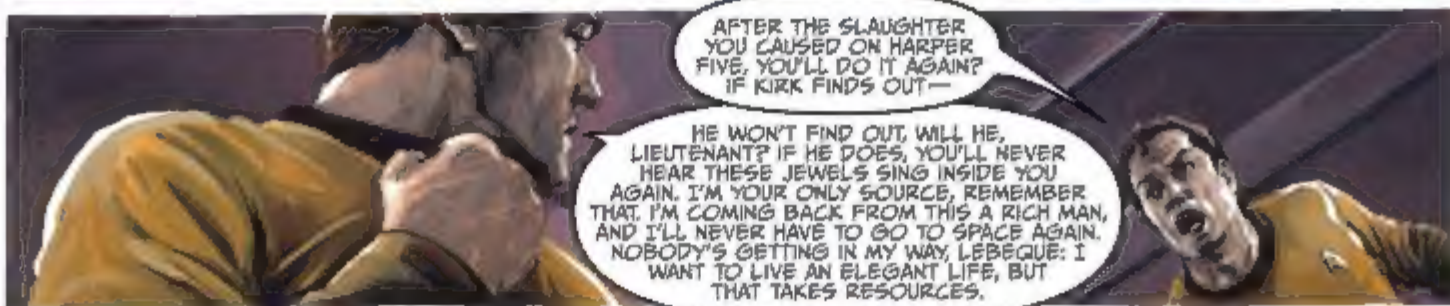
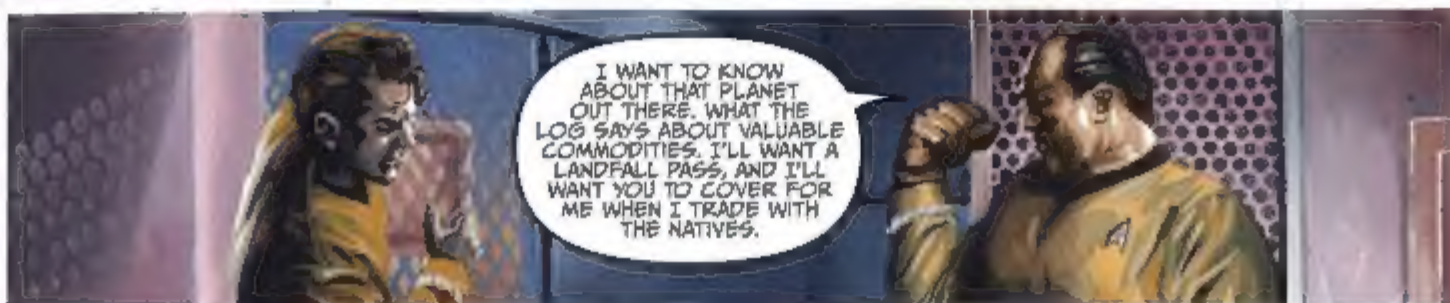


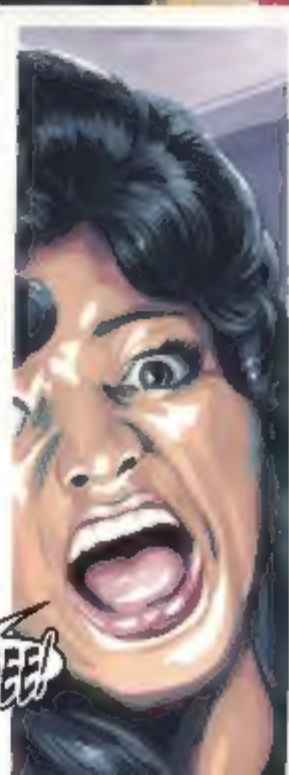
AND BY THEN, IT'S TOO LATE...
MUCH TOO LATE...

BECKWITH,
STOP IT! GIVE
ME ONE!

JEWELS
OF SOUND. SO
EXPENSIVE, SO ILLEGAL.
YOU WANT ME TO GIVE
YOU A DREAM-NARCOTIC
THEY'VE BANNED ALL
THROUGH THE GALAXY?
TSK-TSK, LIEUTENANT,
HOW FAR YOU'VE
FALLEN.

I WON'T BEG,
BECKWITH.











SHIP'S LOG: STAR-DATE 3133.A. THIS CINDER, THIS EMPTY DEATH OF A WORLD

RRMMMMMMMMMMMM

THIS IS THE SOURCE OF THE STRANGE RADIATION THAT HAD OUR CLOCKS RUNNING BACKWARD HOW ODD THAT BECKWITH SHOULD CHOOSE THIS GHOST OF A WORLD FOR HIS ESCAPE

I AM TRANSPORTING TWO SHIFTS FOR PATROL—RAND, SPOCK, MYSELF, AND SIX ENLISTED CREW. WE'LL FIND HIM.

RIMMEL

SHIP'S LOG: STAR-DATE 3133.A. THIS CINDER,
THIS EMPTY DEATH OF A WORLD

RRRRRRRRRRRRRR

THIS IS THE SOURCE OF THE
STRANGE RADIATION THAT HAD
OUR CLOCKS RUNNING BACKWARD.
HOW ODD THAT BECKWITH SHOULD
CHOOSE THIS GHOST OF A
WORLD FOR HIS ESCAPE.

I AM TRANSPORTING TWO SHIFTS
FOR PATROL—RAND, SPOCK,
MYSELF, AND SIX ENLISTED CREW.
WE'LL FIND HIM.

[illegible]

BUT SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT HAS US NERVOUS. A WORLD WITH A DYING SUN SUCH AS THIS. IT SHOULD BE FRIGID, WITHOUT ATMOSPHERE.



BUT WE AREN'T COLD. AND WE CAN BREATHE.

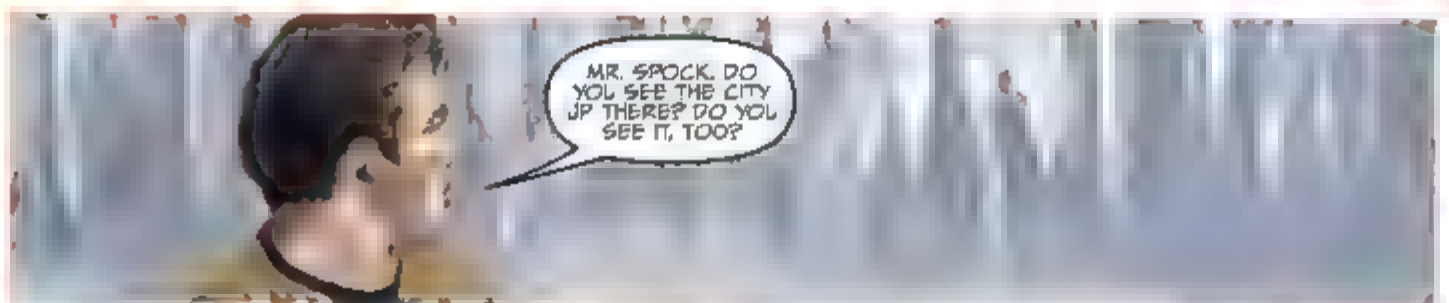


CAPTAIN! THE SOURCE OF THE RADIATION.




THE TRACKS STRAIGHT FOR THE MOUNTAINS.





MR. SPOCK, DO
YOU SEE THE CITY
UP THERE? DO YOU
SEE IT, TOO?




IT IS THERE,
CAPTAIN. IT IS
ILLOGICAL, BUT IT
IS APPARENTLY
REAL




LIKE A
CITY...

"A CITY ON THE
EDGE OF FOREVER"









THE GATEWAY
TO THE PAST? A
TIME MACHINE?

NOT A
MACHINE
A CREATION,
A VORTEX.



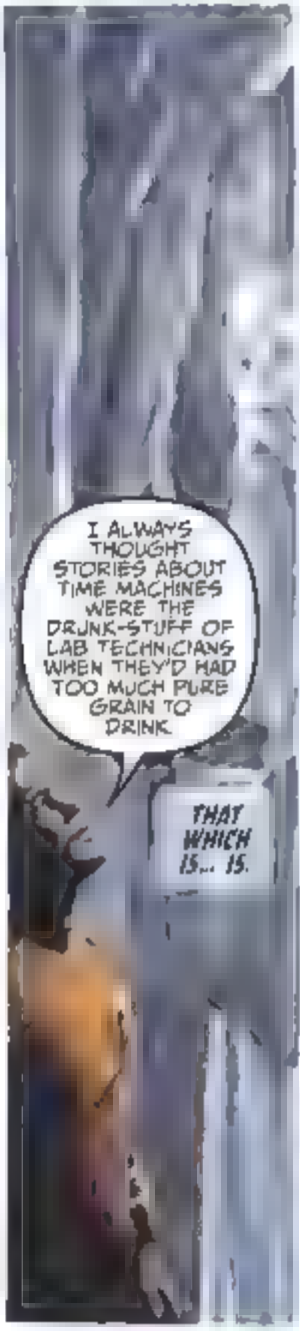
HAVE YOU
SEEN ANOTHER
MAN, DRESSED
AS WE ARE?

WHAT WE SEE
HAS ALREADY
BEEN, OR IS YET
TO BE NO, NO
OTHER LIKE YOU.



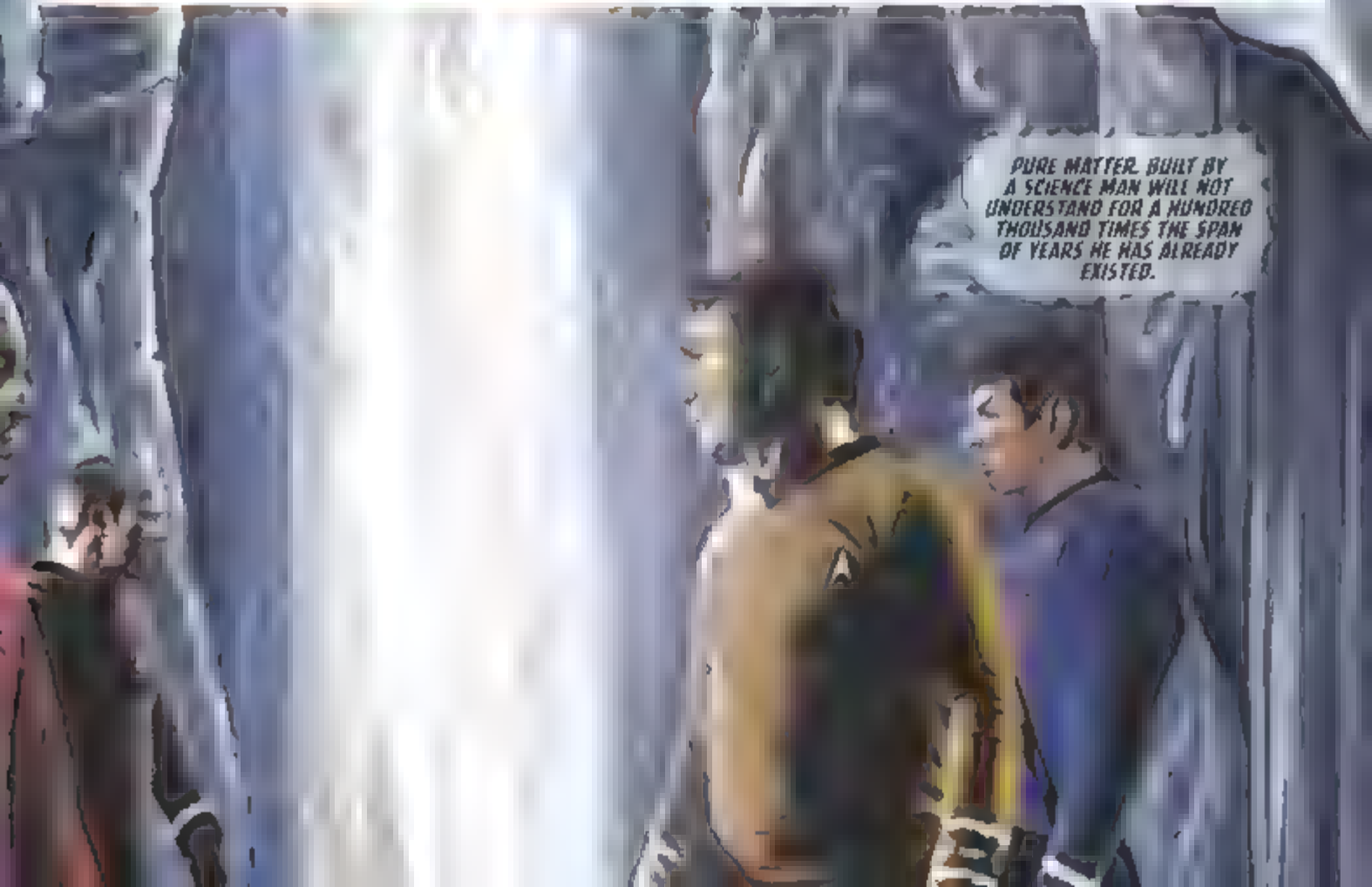
THERE ARE
LEGENDS IN
SPACE ABOUT
YOU.

YOU ARE THE
FIRST VISITORS
WE HAVE HAD
FOR TWICE
TWO HUNDRED
THOUSAND
YEARS.

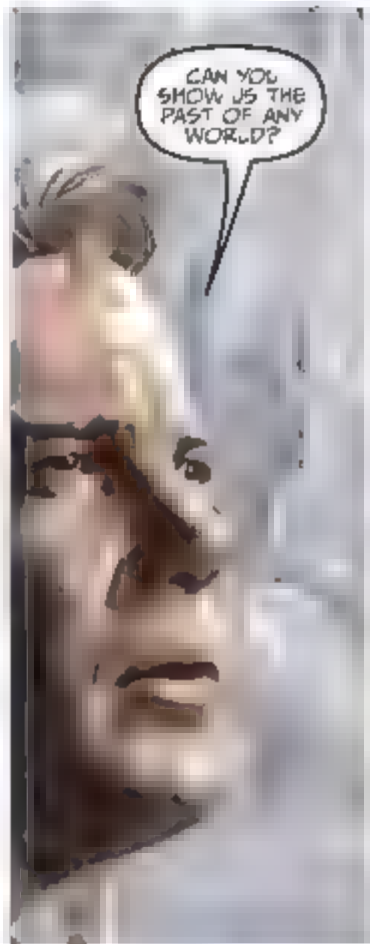


I ALWAYS
THOUGHT
STORIES ABOUT
TIME MACHINES
WERE THE
DRUNK-STUFF OF
LAB TECHNICIANS
WHEN THEY'D HAD
TOO MUCH PURE
GRAIN TO DRINK.

THAT
WHICH
IS... IS.



PURE MATTER. BUILT BY
A SCIENCE MAN WILL NOT
UNDERSTAND FOR A HUNDRED
THOUSAND TIMES THE SPAN
OF YEARS HE HAS ALREADY
EXISTED.






THE PAST OF
OLD EARTH.
PLEASE.




FASCINATING



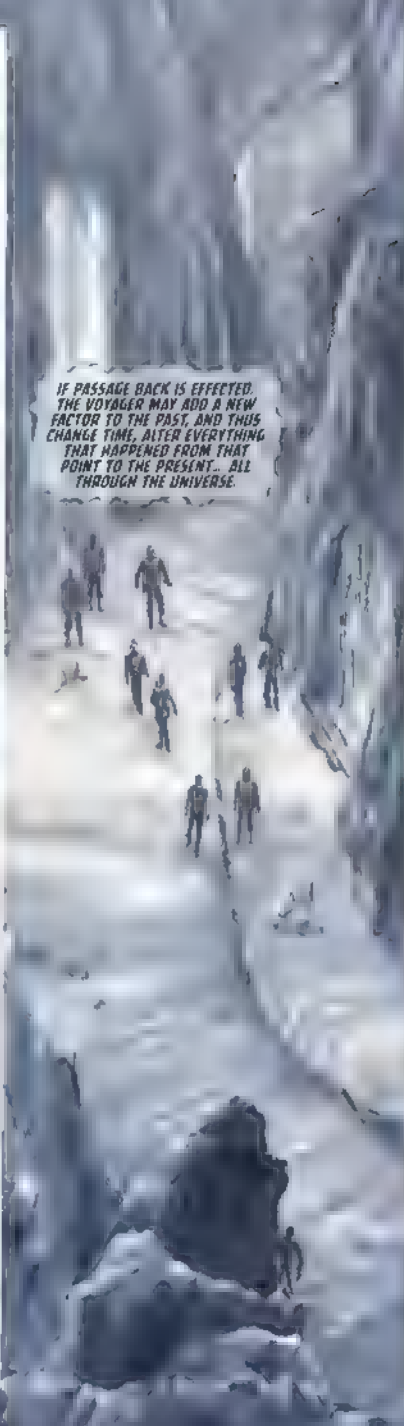
CAN YOU
HOLD IT THERE,
GUARDIAN?



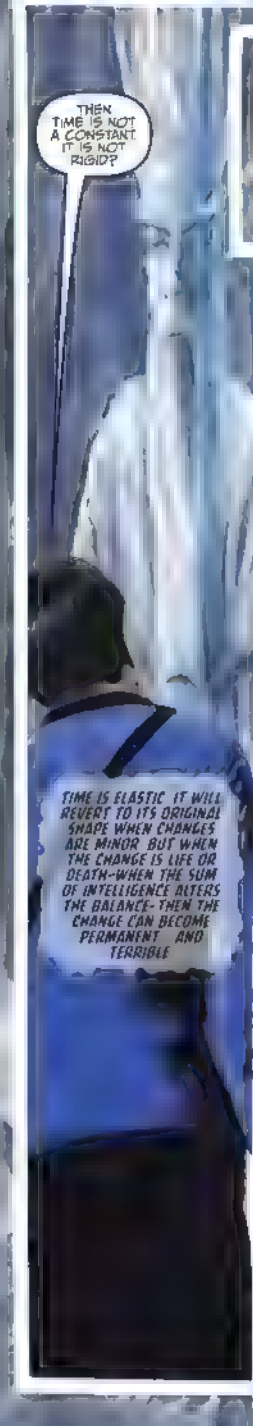
COULD WE
GO BACK, ANY
OF US, SAY
TO THIS TIME
1930 OF OLD
EARTH?




YES, BUT IT IS NOT WISE
MAN AND NON-MAN MUST
LIVE IN THEIR PRESENT OR
THEIR FUTURE. BUT NEVER IN
THEIR PAST. SAVE TO LEARN
LESSONS FROM IT. TIME CAN
BE DANGEROUS.



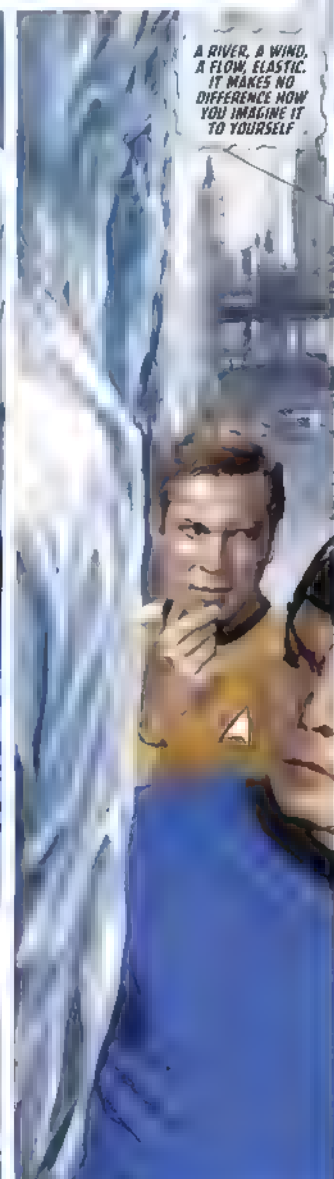
IF PASSAGE BACK IS EFFECTED,
THE VOYAGER MAY ADD A NEW
FACTOR TO THE PAST, AND THIS
CHANGE TIME, ALTER EVERYTHING
THAT HAPPENED FROM THAT
POINT TO THE PRESENT. ALL
THROUGH THE UNIVERSE.



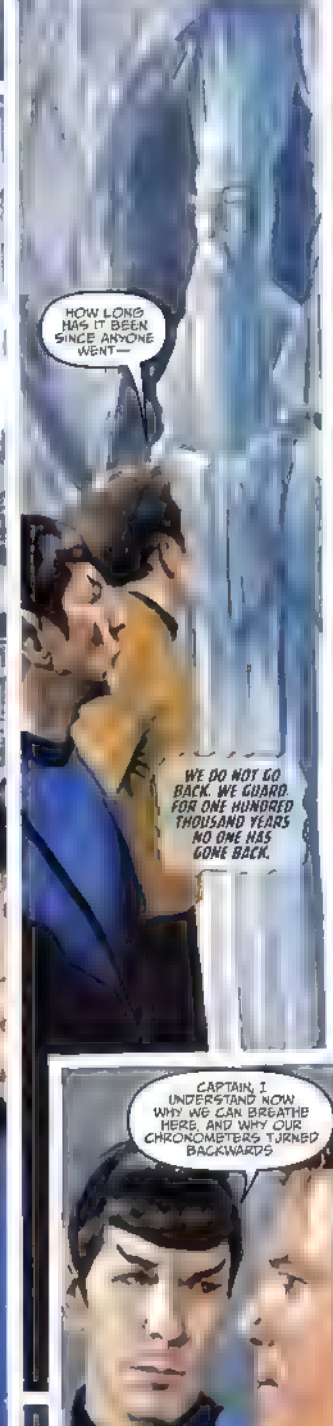
THEN
TIME IS NOT
A CONSTANT.
IT IS NOT
RIGID?



LIKE
CHANGING
THE FLOW OF
A RIVER.




A RIVER, A WIND,
A FLOW, ELASTIC.
IT MAKES NO
DIFFERENCE HOW
YOU IMAGINE IT
TO YOURSELF.

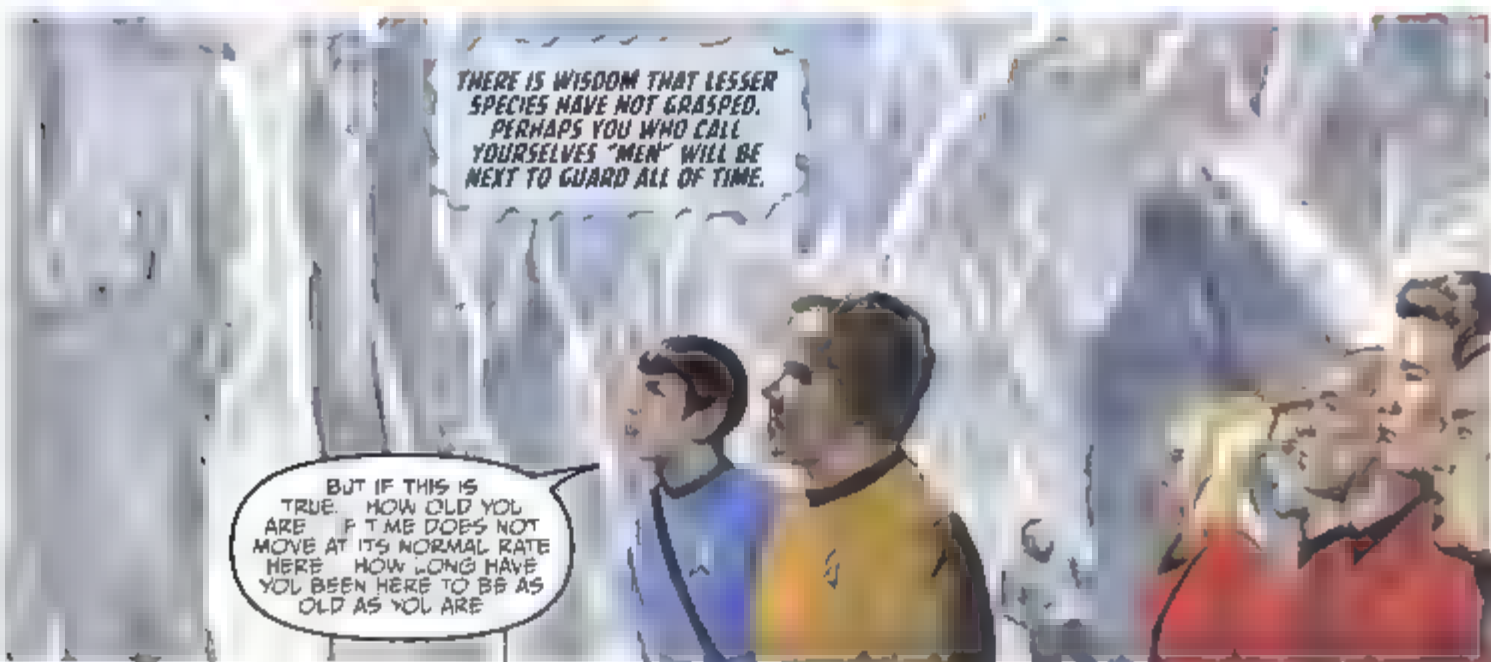


HOW LONG
HAS IT BEEN
SINCE ANYONE
WENT —

WE DO NOT GO
BACK. WE GUARD.
FOR ONE HUNDRED
THOUSAND YEARS
NO ONE HAS
GONE BACK.



CAPTAIN, I
UNDERSTAND NOW
WHY WE CAN BREATHE
HERE, AND WHY OUR
CHRONOMETERS TURNED
BACKWARDS.







TO BE CONTINUED...

"ONLY TIME WILL TELL"

THE MAKING OF HARLAN ELLISON'S CITY ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER COMIC-BOOK SERIES



The "City On the Edge" creative team assembled for the first time at Blastoff Comics on January 18, 2014.
(Back row l-r: Scott Tipton, David Tipton, J.K. Woodward. Front row l-r: Harlan Ellison, Chris Ryall)

"Only time will tell." So began Harlan Ellison's Acknowledgment to the long-out-of-print scriptbook that reproduced his original "City on the Edge..." teleplay. The script that won the Hugo Award in 1967 for Best Dramatic Presentation (the only other *Star Trek* episode to do so was the two-part "The Menagerie."); the one that took home the Writers Guild of America's Award for Most Outstanding Teleplay.

The episode as it was filmed and presented on April 6, 1967 (as episode 28, the penultimate episode of *Star Trek*'s first season) received its share of acclaim, too. *TV Guide* in 1996 named it one of the "100 Most Memorable Moments in TV History"; web site IGN named it number one in its list of the "Top 10 Classic *Star Trek* Episodes"; and the episode ranks atop numerous lists as the best episode of the original series.

And now it's time to even up the debate between the legions of fans who love the episode, and those who love *even more* the original teleplay. For decades, people had heard about the lore behind the episode, but in large measure had no chance to compare a *visual* presentation of the filmed with the unfilmed.

For those not up on the history, the teleplay as written is vastly different than the one that went on-air and became legendary. The reasons for this are well-documented in numerous

other places, and that backstory isn't anything worth dredging up here. We all know that peering behind the curtain for too long can weaken the magic of the story being told, but if you want to follow that old thread, you'll have to hit the various Wikis and Googles to do so. (Or simply buy Harlan's book at:

HERC
P.O. Box 55348
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413)

We're here to spend time with the work itself. To let everyone see the original version come alive in comic-book form.

Time was, even a few years ago, the idea of this comic existing in print or on the screens of your digital devices was as far-fetched as a working warp drive.

When IDW first took over the *Star Trek* comic license in 2007, one of the first things I asked both Harlan and CBS about doing was a comic version of the original "City on the Edge" teleplay. And both, let's just say, *politely demurred*. So we moved on – in the periodical business, there is always another deadline and a dozen new ideas to occupy your time.

So I didn't take time to dwell on the idea. We instead pursued a great many other *Star Trek* projects with CBS, and Harlan and I worked on an adaptation of his original *Phoenix Without Ashes* script. But the idea never completely left my head.

[A commercially minded aside: if you haven't read our *Phoenix Without Ashes* graphic novel, well, considering I edited it and assembled the team and worked with Harlan on it and IDW published it, I'm about the most biased person to ever weigh in on it, but that doesn't mean it isn't actually well worth your time, too. It's a *great* graphic novel and is, like this, a good way to experience Harlan's unaltered text in comic-book form.]

Over the last decade, I learned to keep asking questions—sometimes "no" can turn to "yes" when you least expect it. Last year, I decided to revisit with both Harlan and CBS the idea of doing "City on the Edge" as a comic. The "nos" turned to "hmmm." Which quickly begat a "yes" from both sides. Why now? What do you think I am, foolish enough to question a positive response? Maybe it was the approaching *Star Trek* 50th anniversary; or the fact that both licensor and creator trust us; the "why?" doesn't matter when the answer is "yes."

The requisite eggshells were trod upon at the start, as CBS wanted reassurance that the more contentious history between author and studio would be left where it belonged, in the past.



Harlan takes note of the impressively large size of J.K.'s painted pages.

I had an impassioned plea in my head to present to Harlan, where I would wax flowery about letting His Great Work stand on its own and letting people decide which version they liked the best and how saying nothing would speak volumes. I never needed to present said argument – Harlan beat me to it, telling me from the start that he knew the fans would respond well to the work, so why bother with any



Harlan meets series co-writer David Tipton for the first time.

unnecessary accompaniment beyond that? He said what he had to say long ago. Now, put good work out there and the audience will recognize it as such, and we'll all celebrate the work.

The form this series would take was one I discussed with both Harlan and the adapters of the series, Scott and David Tipton. Scott and David have been mainstays at IDW during the better part of the past decade, and delivered two beloved works of late: the *Star Trek TNG/Doctor Who* crossover in 2012 and the all-encompassing *Doctor Who: Prisoners of Time* maxiseries last year. I knew they'd help craft Harlan's words into captivating chapters here – as much as they combined two loves in the *Trek/Who* book, this project would contain two even greater loves of theirs: Original Series *Star Trek* and the writings of Harlan Ellison. And, in breaking down the script, telling the story over five chapters would give them space to include everything—the last thing any of us wanted to do with a comic that purported to give people the unexpurgated text of the original teleplay was shorten it or trim anything.

So we had our sacred text to work from with the book Harlan had written with all his 40-year afterthoughts, and had the writers to craft it into those five chapters. Now, what about art?

J.K. Woodward seemed to us to be the only real choice here—someone who not only knew *Star Trek* and could bring it to life visually, but could do so in a way unlike most other *Star Trek* comics. J.K. did some amazing things with his painted work on *Star Trek/Doctor Who*, helping that series stand out nicely in 2012. He'd again paint this series and give a tale dreamed nearly fifty years ago the futuristic sheen it deserves.

Besides, J.K. and Harlan were

already linked in my mind – it was Peter David's *Fallen Angel* series, which he relaunched at IDW in 2006 with J.K. as the series artist, that originally got Harlan and me talking, and led over the years to what has become a close friendship that still amazes me when I think about it. Ask me about that story at a convention; it's not sordid and it's one I'm happy to share, but I want to keep the focus in this essay on the "City."

Harlan, Scott, David, and J.K.—we had our creative team. Now how to give this series a distinctive showcase on comic-shop shelves beyond the interiors? We've done a lot of *Star Trek* comics, after all, and worked with a great number of talented cover artists. This time, it needed to be something special – they had to tell you immediately that this was not the *Star Trek* you've gotten used to seeing every month.

That's where Juan Ortiz came in. Over the last few years, Juan had been recreating poster art for every one of the Original Series episodes. Each one distinctive and gorgeous. I first saw his work emblazoned across the *Star Trek* booth at a convention, and luckily, that work has been collected into an oversize hardcover, *Star Trek: The Art of Juan Ortiz*, so everyone can bear witness to his creativity. When Juan said he was interested in applying that skill to all five issues of this series, I knew he would give the comics the look we wanted. Check out the design of this issue's cover again to see what I mean – it's impossible not to be drawn in by the design, the mystery, the color, the technique on display there.

Finally, in the interest of offering something for everyone, I know from years of feedback that some fans love to see the cast they adore on the covers of the comics. To that end, Paul Shipper, who has himself been producing some gorgeously Struzan-like (well, let's be fair, they're Shipper-like in acumen and presentation, but the comparison to the great Drew Struzan is also apt in the overall compositions he creates) comic-book covers and movie posters. So in both

cases, having guys of this talent level produce covers for the series feels like a helluva "get." On the first issue, you "got" Grace Lee Whitney, Leonard Nimoy, and William Shatner, for whom Harlan created this love story.

Finally, there's all of you – the fans who've supported our *Star Trek* efforts and who picked up this first issue. We all know fans are the integral "sixth man" to our starting five (shut up, I know the math doesn't quite add up since we actually have a "starting six or seven"; this is why comics and sports analogies never really work). But what I want to do here is include you all for the world to see. Those of you who have voices about this comic, opinions about what you've just read, and have printable thoughts you want to send my way. There are four more "City" issues to go and I'd like those issues to contain a thriving dialogue in the form of a letters page. Maybe – no promises here but it's possible – I can even coerce HE into replying to a couple of you here, too. The e-mail can be found above, but here is it again: if you've got anything to say about this issue, drop me a line at letters@idwpublishing.com and mark your subject CITY ON THE EDGE FEEDBACK or some variation thereof. Doing so is your tacit approval to print said words in this column, just to cover any legal bases. The last thing I want is any legal action to be associated with "City on the Edge of Forever"...

Thank you for joining us for this journey. Will it deliver on the years of expectations and build-up for all the longtime fans who've heard about this version but never read it? Only time—and your letters—will tell.

See you next month.

—Chris Ryall



Photo credit: Steve Barber © 2014 Paws Here Productions. Foreground photo of Harlan circa 1977 writing "Django" in the front window of Victor Hugo Bookshop, Boston. Photo: S. Stone.